



2016 ANNUAL REPORT



LIVE UNITED

United Way of Northern Nevada and the Sierra





Karen Barsell, CEO and President



Dear Friends,

What an exciting year! This was the year we went ‘all in’ to improve literacy among our region’s children. Why did we do this? We know the direct connection between how well our children are reading at the end of third grade and whether or not they will graduate from high school. We felt we owed it to our families — parents and their children throughout northern Nevada — to bring about a change in early reading proficiency and to our community, to boost our economy with educated, qualified talent.

We also owe it to you, our donors, friends and supporters, without whom none of this would be possible. Thank you.

In this report, you’ll read about our partnerships and their measurable results, improving literacy from birth-to-eight. You’ll also read about how we’re bringing the entire community together to create a ‘Community Solutions Action Plan’ — to make early reading successful now, and for generations to come.

Most importantly, we invite you to roll up your sleeves and find your passion in volunteering with us. Read to a child or assemble a literacy kit for a child to take home. Join with us!

Karen Barsell

Let’s fix this together!

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Bringing the Community Together for Literacy

When the Board of United Way of Northern Nevada and the Sierra established its goal to raise grade-level reading scores, it was with the awareness that the active involvement of the community would be necessary to achieve this goal. The organization pledged to bring the community together for a wider discussion to create authentic systemic change.

During this past year, several meetings were held, bringing together individuals and multi-sector organizations to explore the issue. A first meeting was held in October 2015, and yielded a tremendous amount of enthusiasm and commitment for a unified community process. A number of attendees committed leadership, resources, aligned programs of their own, potential linkages, marketing assistance and planning expertise. The meeting culminated in a shared vision for literacy's role in bettering lives for people in our region: ***'Literacy is the Cure.'*** Moving forward, this inspirational phrase has since guided the informal process of this group as the energy builds toward a more formal, facilitated process.

United Way convened a follow-up meeting in May 2016, with a deeper discussion exploring types and levels of involvement, types of partners and organizations, and community agendas.

The conversation was facilitated by Dr. Steve Greeley, an expert in the 'Community Solutions Action Plan Framework,' or 'CSAP'. This model for community planning is offered by the Campaign for Grade Level Reading, a collaborative effort by foundations, nonprofit partners, business leaders, government agencies, states and communities across the nation to ensure that more children in low-income families succeed in school, graduate prepared for college and a career, and aspire for active citizenship. The Campaign focuses on an important predictor of school success and high school graduation — grade-level reading by the end of third grade. The Campaign includes more than 240 communities across the nation, many of which are United Ways. At the conclusion of this meeting, there was strong consensus for moving ahead with a formal CSAP process for Northern Nevada.

NOTE:

*United Way is pleased to be moving ahead with a **formal, community-wide 'Community Solutions Action Plan'** in fiscal year 2016-2017.*



Strengthening Families

It is only after a family's basic needs are addressed that we begin to accomplish our mission. Strong readers start with a strong family, and strong families produce stronger readers.

IN 2015-2016 UNITED WAY:

Helped families save money on tax preparation fees by offering **MyFreeTaxes.com**.

Helped families with the basics, food, shelter and clothing, through our administration of the **Emergency Food and Shelter program**.

People across our region have saved \$413,634 on their prescriptions in this year alone, with a savings of over \$3.6 million to date.

"The pharmacist kind of chuckled and said, 'we'll see if this saves you anything.' She was surprised, as was I, that a \$136 prescription came back at only \$32.32. Thank you FamilyWize, it was very cool." — **Floyd**

Connected families with prescription discounts through our **Familywize** program.



Connected families with services through our extensive outreach with **Nevada 2-1-1**.



How our funded partnerships strengthen families by helping develop critical bonds between parents. Here's a parent's comments about the 'Building Blocks to Literacy' program.

"Thank you so much for sponsoring story time activities and free books to take home! As a parent, I really value these resources! I see the many benefits of reading to my three young children (5, 2, and infant) and love to watch them as their imaginations begin to take flight. They are gaining a love for learning that I know will benefit them throughout their lives and I see their confidence being reinforced as they learn new things and we spend quality time reading together.

We live in a rural part of Nevada and it can be quite an effort to get to our closest library. Just the driving distance alone makes it hard

in many instances to get to the library (even with my strong love for books and strong desire to incorporate reading in my children's daily routine). That makes the funding for the books that can be sent home even more appreciated! It allows us to continue to grow our own little library at home and encourages continuous reading and provides fresh, new and fun material when getting to the actual library is difficult or the weather is bad. We have benefited greatly by being able to take advantage of your funding for a free book to take home!"

— **Nicole Gardner, Clover Valley, Nevada**



Investing in the First Five

It's what happens in our first years of life that point us in the right direction. What kind of stage is being set? Sturdy or fragile? 90% of brain development happens within the first 5 years of life – it's an impact for a lifetime.

The **'Family Reading Program'** is a partnership that includes the Northern Nevada Literacy Council (lead), Job Opportunities in Nevada (JOIN), UNR Cooperative Extension, Nevada RSVP, Seniors in Service, Lemelson Academy, Sierra Nevada Journeys, Churchill County Library and Grassroots Books.

The program engages parents (and grandparents, too) and children, building foundational skills for nurturing ongoing literacy, step by step in a variety of sessions.

In 2015-2016, the Family Reading Program served families in Reno, Sparks, Incline, Elko, West Wendover, Jackpot, Wells, Carson City and Fallon.

The program was attended by 1,042 participants, and 968 books were distributed.



*Jesus' wife, Petya, and their daughter play with the finger puppets they made together after reading *Baby Animals on the Farm*.*

Jesus Villa came with his wife and toddler to multiple 'Family Reading Program' sessions, reading the books together, and then participating in related activities, projects and group discussions.

At the end of the sessions, they got to take books home to start building their home library. Jesus told the Family Reading Program coordinator how his own reading is improving—as all three family members build early literacy skills together. *"My English reading is very bad and I have a learning disability. So I use these easy Family Reading Program books to read to my daughter over and over to improve my English reading. As she grows and moves on to more difficult books, I will read them with her so I can improve my reading."* ***Jesus' story illustrates how parents and their children can effectively build literacy skills by working together over time.***



Investing in the First Five

The ‘*Building Blocks to Literacy*’ partnership works in rural and frontier areas serving parents and children, the community and early childhood classrooms. ‘Building Blocks to Literacy’ is a collaboration of the Wells Family Resource Center (lead), Great Basin College Child and Family Center, Nevada Early Intervention Services, and the Elko-Lander-Eureka County Library System. One key element of their work

is the introduction of the ‘Ages and Stages’ questionnaire (ASQ) to parents of the youngest learners. This is important because the results help determine if a child’s development is on schedule. Children can fall behind very quickly, and the ASQ assessment helps get them back on track more quickly.

With a goal of reaching 15 parents with the ASQ in 2015-16, the program had 17 assessments completed.



The partnership uses the ‘story time’ model to reach parents and children in remote areas. **339 children participated in story times in 2015-2016, and each child had a brand new book to take home to start building a home library.**

“The Wells Library story times have become a very important night at my house. Not only are my little girls excited about going to the library to pick out a new book, but it makes reading fun by incorporating social interactions. I feel that by having my girls see people from their community reading, it emphasizes the importance of reading – as well as they get to make meaning of the reading by discussing what they have heard and working on a project with the people around them.”

— Erin Smith, Parent





Supporting Kindergarten Readiness

The **'Family Reading Program'** targets parents and their children from birth through third grade. The program models techniques and activities parents can use with their children to support their literacy development. It also helps parents

who are English Language Learners read more fluently to their children. As children rapidly build their early literacy and learning skills, it's important for parents to continue spending a growing amount of time reading with their child.



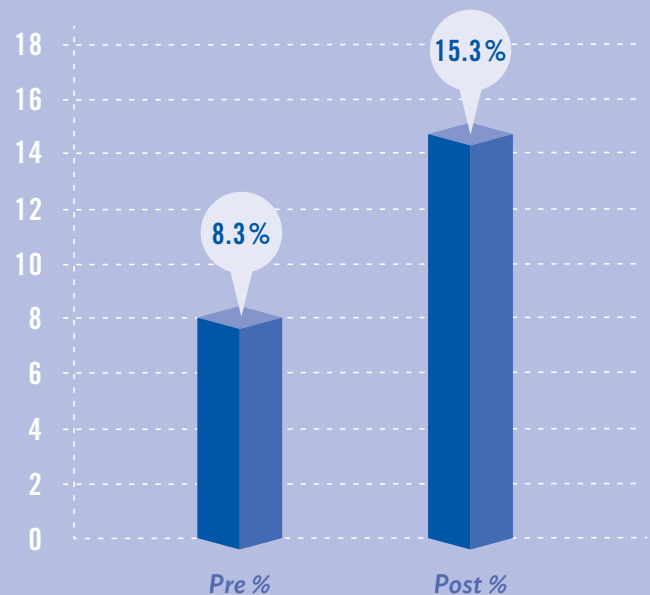
"I liked how the Family Reading Program combined science and literacy. My children loved building ramps and observing how an angle affects their car's velocity."

— Rebecca Taylor, Fallon



Research indicates that the amount and quality of time parents spend reading with their children affects emerging language and literacy skills. In its literacy sessions, the **'Family Reading Program'** emphasizes to parent participants the importance of reading often and for at least 30 minutes at a time. Parents also learn techniques to use and ways to 'extend the literacy value of a book,' through related activities with their child.

'FAMILY READING PROGRAM' Parent and Child Reading Time Increase



ASSESSMENT OF READING TIME

Percentage of parents indicating that they read in excess of 30 minutes with children each time they read together; measured by pre- and post- assessment.



Supporting Kindergarten Readiness



Children practicing new social-emotional techniques they have learned.

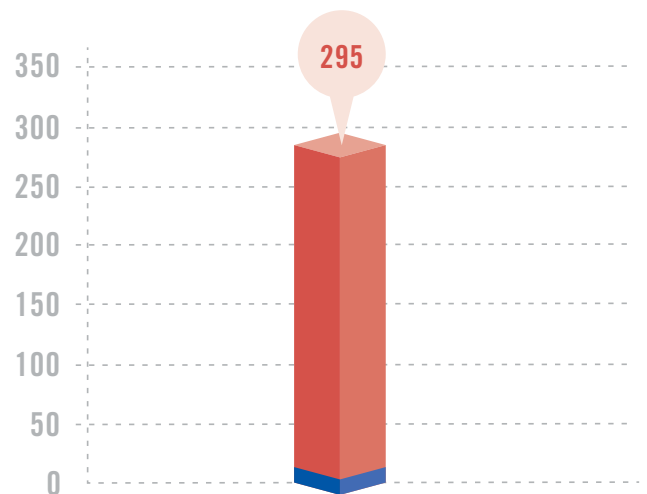
The *'Building Blocks to Literacy'* partnership works to prepare children with fundamentals needed to be 'school ready.' A focus on library usage and attaining one's own library card is emphasized for all children. They provide specialized 'e-books' for parents and children who live in remote areas away from libraries.

In 2015-16, 236 new library cards were issued as a result of these efforts. The program was attended by 1,008 participants, and 339 books were distributed to attendees.

The foundation to early literacy and language development begins with a child's ability to build positive relationships with children and adults, follow basic routines, pay attention to the teacher, and develop skills to become emotionally literate across both the home and school environments. The *'Building Blocks to Literacy'* partnership provides multiple sessions to teach preschool teachers 'social-emotional' classroom skills to teach to their own students. The training uses the TACSEI model (Technical Assistance Center on Social Emotional Intervention). ***With a goal to reach 15 teachers in the region in 2015-2016, 295 attended.***

'BUILDING BLOCKS TO LITERACY'

Reaches Preschool Teachers with Social-Emotional Skills Training

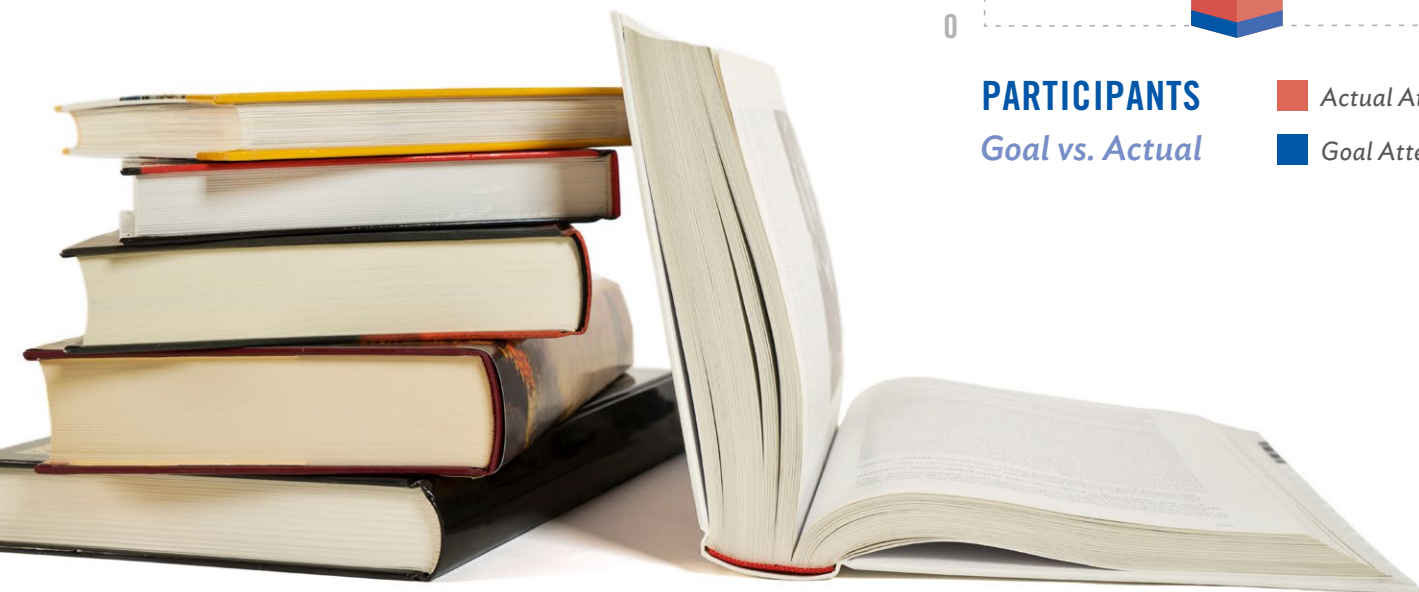


PARTICIPANTS

Goal vs. Actual

Actual Attendees

Goal Attendees (15)





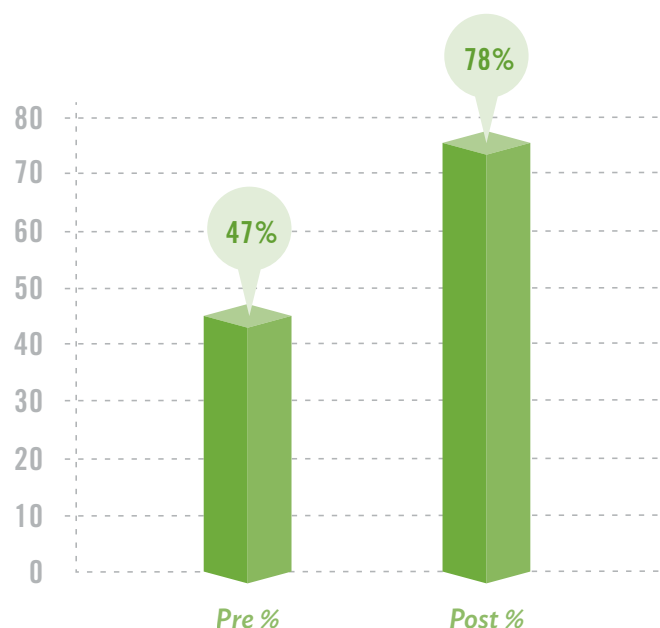
Helping Young Readers Stay On Track

'Boys and Girls Club Reads' is a partnership of Boys and Girls Clubs in Truckee Meadows (lead), North Lake Tahoe, Western Nevada, Mason Valley and Elko.

'Boys and Girls Club Reads' utilizes a combination of activities that include group reading, individual reading, online curriculum, afterschool tutoring, summer learning loss prevention programs, library partnerships and parental engagement. **In 2015-2016, 1,463 parents and children were served by the partnership across the region.**

Young readers can quickly fall behind in the early grades if they are not consistently reinforcing good literacy and reading habits. The 'Boys and Girls Club Reads' partnership works with children in kindergarten through third grade in five Clubs throughout the region. The program emphasizes individual and group activities designed to raise a child's reading level.

'BOYS AND GIRLS CLUB READS' Grade Level Reading Increase



ASSESSMENT OF READING GRADE LEVEL

■ Participants reading at grade level



At the Boys and Girls Clubs of Western Nevada in Carson City, kindergartener Alondra began the program with very poor literacy skills. The assessment tool used by BGC Reads provides a list of grade-appropriate words that children are to read in order to assess their skill level. When she began the program, Alondra couldn't read a single word that was on the kindergarten list. In addition to time spent with staff during BGC Reads, several older youth began working with Alondra to provide her extra help. At the end of the session, Alondra had surpassed the kindergarten level and was reading at a low first-grade level.



Helping Young Readers Stay On Track

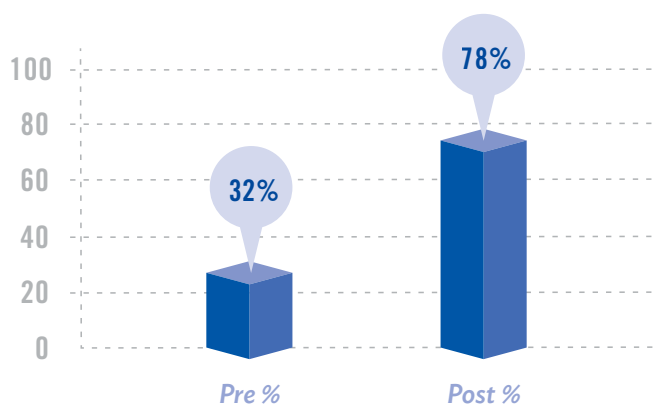
‘Nature’s Transformers’ is a partnership comprised of Sierra Nevada Journeys (lead), Nevada Outdoor School, Great Basin Institute, and Desert Research Institute’s ‘Green Power’ program. The program includes classroom learning, field

study, a literacy kit and book to take home to continue lessons with parent involvement. **In 2015-2016, 2,448 parents and children participated in the program and 1,406 new books were provided for the home library.**

Hands-on learning experiences have been shown to promote early literacy by providing an authentic context for learning. With Sierra Nevada Journeys’ ‘Nature’s Transformers’ program, field-study experiences provide ‘real-time’ sights, sounds and smells that stimulate cognitive and linguistic learning. The program gauges the level of participant ‘grasp’ of key concepts covered over the course of the curriculum by conducting a pre-assessment prior to the class and then a post-assessment once the program is completed.

NATURE’S TRANSFORMERS’ PARTICIPANTS

Science-Based Literacy Increases



ASSESSMENT OF SCIENCE-BASED LITERACY KNOWLEDGE & CONCEPTS

■ Assessment Scores



Sierra Nevada Journeys’ Education Coordinator and Instructor, Jamie Garaventa, arrived for her first lesson at Maxwell Elementary School to teach the Nature’s Transformers curriculum. The classroom teacher had prepped the students, telling them they would be learning about science. As Jamie sat down to read the non-fiction book, one student started looking confused.

Halfway through the book, the little boy raised his hand and asked, “*I thought we were learning science?!*” Jamie asked the boy, “*Do you think we can learn science from books?*” He had an aha-moment responding, “*Yeah! You’re right!*” For the rest of the program he was engaged and excited about reading the different materials and books used throughout the curriculum. He continued to ask questions about what they were learning and was interested in the topic — making him more interested in reading about it.



Financials

Statement of Financial Position

ASSETS

Current Assets	\$1,047,303
Property and Equipment, Net	\$109,604
Total Assets	\$1,156,907

LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS

Current Liabilities	\$147,774
Unrestricted Net Assets	\$963,455
Temporarily and Permanently Restricted Net Assets	\$95,719
Total Liabilities	\$1,206,948

Statement of Activities

PUBLIC SUPPORT AND REVENUE

Campaign Support	\$1,446,227
Donor Designations to Other Organizations	(\$371,424)
Provision for Uncollectible Pledges	(\$59,022)
Net Campaign Support	\$1,015,781
Grants, Contracts, Fees, Interest, Sponsorship	\$25,223
Total Public Support and Revenue	\$1,041,004

EXPENSES

Program Services

Community Impact and Impact Initiatives	\$382,311
Direct Program Costs	\$446,764
Total Program Services	\$829,075

Support Services

Management and General	\$201,612
Fundraising	\$153,171
Total Support Services	\$354,783

Total Program and Support Services	\$1,183,858
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Changes in Net Assets	(\$142,854)
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Why We Do It:

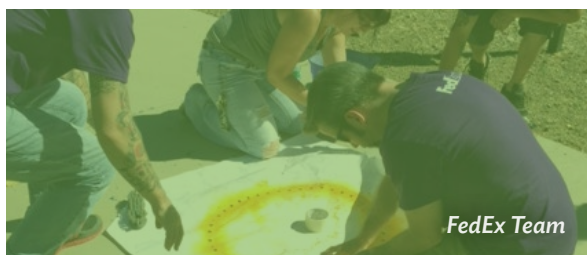
- ! **ALMOST 70% OF CHILDREN** in Nevada are not reading at grade level.
- ! **1 IN 4 CHILDREN** under 5 in Nevada lives below the poverty level.
- ! Children in poverty may hear **30 MILLION FEWER WORDS** by the time they are 3.
- ! Every “drop-out” costs the community an estimated **\$260,000**.
- ! **¾ OF STUDENTS** who were poor readers in 3rd grade **REMAINED POOR READERS IN HIGH SCHOOL**.

How We’re Doing It:

- 1 Strengthening Families**
Family is the foundation to early childhood reading.
- 2 Early Learning & Development**
Invest in the first five.
- 3 Kindergarten Readiness & Early Literacy**
Learning takes practice, practice, practice.
- 4 Early Grade Success**
Stay on track now, succeed in the future.



THANK YOU



Every year, generous companies and their employees contribute dollars and volunteer their time – ***giving selflessly of themselves to improve the lives of others.***

TOP 10 CORPORATE PARTNERS

UPS
NV Energy
Wells Fargo
US Bank
GE Energy
Enterprise Holdings
Costco
AT&T
Scheels
AAA Northern California, Nevada, & Utah

OUR MISSION

We link the community's will and resources to improve lives



LIVE UNITED

United Way of Northern Nevada and the Sierra

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